

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application, as amended, in view of the following remarks.

The present invention as set forth in **amended Claim 1** relates to **an image recording method** comprising:

applying a pretreatment liquid on a surface of a recording material; and

discharging a recording ink according to image signals to form an ink image on the pretreatment liquid on the surface of the recording material before the pretreatment liquid applied on the recording material has dried, wherein the recording ink comprises a solvent and a component dispersed or dissolved in the solvent,

wherein the pretreatment liquid comprises a compound depressing at least one of the dispersibility and solubility of the component in the recording ink in an amount of 10 to 80 % by weight based on total weight, and

wherein the pretreatment liquid has a viscosity of from 100 to 10, 000 mPa • s at 25 °C.

In **amended Claim 38** the pretreatment liquid has a viscosity of from **100 to 10, 000 mPa • s** at 25 °C.

New Claims 40 and 41 have been added in which the pretreatment liquid has a viscosity of from **300 to 2, 000 mPa • s** at 25 °C.

In contrast, Kurabayashi et al disclose a viscosity of the liquid composition of between 1 and 30 cps at 25 °C (1 to 30 mPa • s) at column 6, lines 43-48. There is no disclosure or suggestion to use a higher viscosity as claimed. In addition, the claimed viscosity of the pretreatment liquid improves the image quality. The pretreatment liquid having the claimed viscosity is superior to conventional pretreatment liquids because the ink-penetrating problem, the feathering problem and the image blurring problem can be prevented (specification, at page

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22, line 11 to page 23, line 19). This is further evidenced by the Example and Comparative of the specification. See for example Table 1 at pages 116 to page 120 of the specification.

None of Nagai et al, Takemoto et al, Hosoi et al, and Shimoda et al cure the defects of Kurabayashi et al. In regard to Shimoda et al, the Examiner has already acknowledged in the Office Action of December 19, 2003 at page 6 that a viscosity as claimed is not disclosed.

Therefore, the rejections of 1) Claims 1-3, 6-9 and 12-13 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Kurabayashi et al (U.S. 5618338), 2) Claims 4-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kurabayashi et al (U.S. 5618338) in view of Nagai et al (U.S. 261349), 3) Claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kurabayashi et al (U.S. 5618338) in view of Takemoto et al (U.S. 6286853), 4) Claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kurabayashi et al (U.S. 5618338) in view of Hosoi et al (U.S. 5589259), and 5) Claim 38 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shimoda et al (U.S. 6126281) in view of Kurabayashi et al (U.S. 5618338) are believed to be unsustainable as the present invention is neither anticipated nor obvious and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

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This application presents allowable subject matter, and the Examiner is kindly requested to pass it to issue. Should the Examiner have any questions regarding the claims or otherwise wish to discuss this case, he is kindly invited to contact Applicants' below-signed representative, who would be happy to provide any assistance deemed necessary in speeding this application to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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